

# Complaints Policy

## Aim of this Policy?

Doorstep Library (DL) is committed to the highest standards of openness, probity and accountability.

The aim of this policy is to provide a mechanism to enable trustees, volunteers and members of the public to voice concerns in a responsible and effective manner. Where an individual discovers information which they believe shows serious malpractice or wrongdoing within the organisation then this information should be disclosed internally without fear of reprisal.

## Who is covered by this Policy?

This policy applies to all trustees, volunteers and members of the public to use if they wish to make a complaint. There is a separate Grievance Procedure for employees of the DL.

This policy is designed to enable trustees, volunteers and members of the public to raise concerns internally and at a high level and to disclose information which the individual believes shows malpractice or impropriety. This policy is intended to cover concerns which are in the public interest and may at least initially be investigated separately but might then lead to the invocation of other procedures e.g. disciplinary. These concerns could include:

- Financial malpractice or impropriety or fraud
- Failure to comply with a legal obligation or Statutes (including the safeguarding of children and vulnerable adults)
- Dangers to Health & Safety or the environment
- Criminal activity
- Improper conduct or unethical behaviour
- Attempts to conceal any of these

DL aims to investigate all formal complaints promptly, thoroughly and fairly and to do whatever we can to put things right if the complaint was justified. We will explain why we do things in a certain way if we do not think that any change should be made

DL will treat all such disclosures in a confidential and sensitive manner. The identity of the individual making the allegation may be kept confidential, so long as it does not hinder or frustrate any investigation. However, the investigation process may reveal the source of the information and the individual making the disclosure may need to provide a statement as part of the evidence required.

If an individual makes an allegation in good faith, which is not confirmed by subsequent investigation, no action will be taken against that individual. In making a disclosure the individual should exercise due care to ensure the accuracy of the information. If, however,

an individual makes malicious or vexatious allegations, and particularly if he or she persists with making them, disciplinary action may be taken against that individual.

### **Procedure for making a complaint:**

- If you are a family receiving Doorstep Library reading sessions or a volunteer, please contact the Head of Programmes, Emily Oliver, on [emily@doorsteplibrary.org.uk](mailto:emily@doorsteplibrary.org.uk);
- If you are a donor, supporter or other interested party, please contact the Head of Marketing and Communications, Henri Yoxall, on [henri@doorsteplibrary.org.uk](mailto:henri@doorsteplibrary.org.uk);
- If your complaint is regarding the Head of Programmes or Head of Marketing and Communications, please contact the CEO, Katie Bareham, on [katie@doorsteplibrary.org.uk](mailto:katie@doorsteplibrary.org.uk);
- Complaints concerning the CEO should be dealt with by contacting the Chair of the Board of Trustees, Annabel James, on [annabel@doorsteplibrary.org.uk](mailto:annabel@doorsteplibrary.org.uk);
- The CEO is responsible for dealing with complaints from staff (please see the separate Grievance Procedure Policy) and making sure these are escalated to the board of trustees where necessary.

As a general rule it is best if complaints are dealt with immediately by the people closest to the event, rather than by someone who was not involved after time has elapsed.

### **Timescale**

Within **5 working days** you will be sent written confirmation that the complaint has been received and the name of the person who is dealing with it.

DL will aim to investigate your complaint properly and to give you a reply within **10 working days**, setting out how the problem will be dealt with. If this is not possible, we will let you know what action has been taken to date or is being considered. DL will then keep you informed about progress every **15 working days**.

### **Next steps**

If you are not satisfied with the action taken to resolve your complaint, please contact the CEO or the Chair. If the complaint cannot be resolved, the Chair will report the matter to the next meeting of the Board of Trustees, who will decide on any further steps. The decision of the Board of Trustees will be the final stage of the DL complaints procedure.

If the investigation finds the allegations unsubstantiated and all internal procedures have been exhausted, but the complainant is not satisfied with the outcome of the investigation, we recognise the lawful rights of the complainant to make disclosures to prescribed persons (such as the Health and Safety Executive, the Charity Commission, the Fundraising Standards Board, or the Local Child Safeguarding Board), or, where justified, elsewhere.

